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## Issues of Soviet Foreign Policy History

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**Abstract:**

*The article examines Vladimir Mikhailovich Khvostov's research activities and his interests, on issues related to Soviet foreign policy which were quite diverse.*

*Having analyzed numerous historiographic and archival sources, as well as the existing literature about the master's study, it will be rational to single out three areas of the scholar's scientific interests: the issues of the history of diplomacy and international relations; the problems of universal and domestic history (mainly, the events of world wars); as well as the tasks of pedagogical science in general (including historical education).*

*In any of the three presented research topics, V.M. Khvostov could adequately prove himself as a teacher, a historian and an organizer of science.*

**Keywords:** *History, Historiography, Foreign Policy, History of Diplomacy, International Relations, Universal History, National History.*

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## **1. Introduction**

Vladimir Mikhailovich Khvostov is one of the largest, comprehensively educated national historians. His scientific legacy has numerous works on the history of diplomacy and international relations, on the issues of major problem research of general and national history. Among them, the doctoral thesis "Foreign policy of the German Empire in the last years of Bismarck's Chancery", the articles on the history of international relations in the Middle East at the end of the 19th century, the manuscripts of the second volume of "History of Diplomacy", the introduction to the book "The history of the USSR foreign policy", numerous articles and reports on various foreign policy issues of the USSR and international relations.

The history of international relations has always been one of the most popular topics in Russian historiography. At present, the approach to international relations (including the analysis of their history) has changed significantly. The point is that Soviet historians, if they turned to the study of the historical science of that time, they assessed it, first, from the positions of Marxist criticism of bourgeois-liberal historiography and the methodology of history, characterized its state as the period of the science crisis, from which it came out with the assertion of Marxism. Only at the end of the 20th century, due to the departure of historical thought from the recognition of the Marxist conception of history as the only true one, the interest in the study of other trends of historiography increased. Today, it is obvious that there is the need to determine a qualitative level of Russian historical science development in the middle of the 20th century, its place in the pan-European context of historical research development.

In the field of universal history, V.M. Khvostov worked mainly on the history of international relations of new and modern times. In the 1930-ies he published several articles devoted to the history of international relations in the Middle East at the end of the 19th century, based on archival materials. Later he was engaged in the history of foreign policy of Germany. The result was the work "The Foreign Policy of the German Empire during the Last Years of Bismarck's Chancellorship", which in 1938 was defended for the degree of Doctor of Historical Sciences.

Vladimir Mikhailovich Khvostov explored the relationship of leading world powers, military clashes and diplomatic history. Nevertheless, the creative contribution of this scholar has not become the object of special consideration yet.

## **2. Methodology**

The main methods of research were the general scientific methods (analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction), and specifically-historical methods. The historical-genetic method allowed to recreate Vladimir Khvostov's creative portrait in the chronological framework of the period under study - the twentieth century (1930-1970-ies); the historical-comparative method was used to distinguish the new

elements that V.M. Khvostov brought in the study of national and universal history; Chronological, historical-biographical methods, the methods of historiographical and source analysis were also used.

The basic principles of the study were the principle of historicism and objectivity in the evaluation of V.M. Khvostov's contribution in the study of foreign policy of Russia and the USSR history and international relations, in the teaching of social sciences, in the activities of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences during the period under study.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

The problems of war and peace, a peaceful coexistence and international cooperation, the issue of disarmament and European security have always been of interest for V.M. Khvostov. He appealed to them already in his early works, for example, in his article "From Disarmament to War Talks" in the magazine "Struggle of Classes" but he began to pay more attention to them since 1955, when he became the editor-in-chief of the journal *International Affairs*. In one issue of the journal he presented the editorial "Put an End to the Cold War" (Khvostov, 1940).

In the journal *Kommunist* the article by Vladimir Mikhailovich Khvostov entitled "The instructive lessons of history" was published in 1959 in which he writes that from the very first days of its existence the Soviet state concentrated foreign policy efforts on the conclusion of a universal democratic peace without annexations and indemnities and a resolute break with the imperialist policies of the past; then, when the conclusion of universal peace was thwarted by the Entente powers, the goal of our policy was Russia withdrawal from the imperialist war through a peace treaty with Germany (Vygodsky *et al.*, 1965, p. 56).

V.M. Khvostov stated that when the treaty was finally concluded, the main task was the all-round extension of the achieved peaceful rest and its turning into a lasting peace. After the intervention of the Entente was launched despite these efforts, the main thing was the prompt elimination of the intervention and the restoration of peace with all countries.

According to V.M. Khvostov's opinion, when the interventionists were defeated, and the world was conquered as the result of a fierce struggle, then all means of the foreign policy of the Soviet state focused on the prevention of the attempts to resume intervention, to ensure a lasting peace, to settle for this on the basis of equality of disputes with capitalist states and the most intensive economic cooperation with them (Khvostov, 1942).

The theme of the union between Russia and France was described in a special work by V.M. Khvostov "The Franco-Russian Union and Its Historical Importance". This alliance was described in it as an instrument of imperialist policy, the preparation of

the First World War. At the same time, he refuted the version of German historiography about the Franco-Russian alliance as the alliance of two aggressors against peace-loving Germany. In his book, Vladimir Mikhailovich wrote that the main test and the most important application of this alliance was the war against Germany, which began in 1914. He conditioned that powerful support on the Marne that the French troops received from the Russian troops advancing on East Prussia. The historical significance of the Franco-Russian alliance is well illustrated by the entire history of French diplomacy in the period between the two wars. It is widely known the importance of French security in French diplomacy after the First World War (Zemsky *et al.*, 1957, p. 32).

V.M. Khvostov believed that if we look at the history of French diplomacy before 1914, the term "security" itself had been almost never met. And it did not occur because the Franco-Russian Union solved the problem that arose for France from the numerous Franco-German contradictions and from the considerable superiority of forces - economic and military ones - of its eastern neighbor. Vladimir Mikhailovich wrote that unhappily for the whole of Europe, the Munich policy has crossed out the Franco-Russian treaty. Thus, concluded V.M. Khvostov, the issue of the historical significance of the Franco-Russian alliance has, of course, not only historical but also actual political significance (Khvostov, 1976).

In 1945, a short essay by V.M. Khvostov was issued under the name "Defeat of Germans near Rostov in November of 1941". In this essay, the author described the military operations of the Soviet troops in the Rostov operation during November 1941 and the defeat of the German fascist troops. The book contained brief conclusions and the results of the operation in the general course of the war with the German army. The book was intended for the officers of the Red Army (Khvostov, 1943a).

In the article "The Principle of Peaceful Coexistence", the historian wrote that the victory over the interventionists meant that the Soviet country won back the conditions under which it could peacefully co-exist with the capitalist powers, which were forced now to enter trade relations with us. Putting forward their proposals at the conferences in Genoa and The Hague, the Soviet government sought to find the best conditions for peaceful coexistence with capitalist states, for close economic cooperation with them based on equality and mutual benefit (Khvostov, 1976).

In 1958, the State Publishing House of Political Literature published the book by V.M. Khvostov "40 years of struggle for peace. A short essay". Despite the relatively small volume - eight and a quarter of printed sheets and a modest subtitle "Short Essay", the author in a laconic form, but very clearly laid out the main stages of Soviet foreign policy in 1917-1957. He gave a clear definition of the nature and the character of the foreign-policy peaceful politics of the Soviet socialist state, spoke of his desire to develop economic cooperation with the capitalist countries, about the struggle of the USSR against the threat of fascist aggression in the pre-war

years and its liberation mission in the Great Patriotic War against the fascist invaders. In his brief essay, Vladimir Mikhailovich Khvostov described the Soviet Union liberation mission in the Great Patriotic War against the fascist invaders, as well as the struggle of the USSR to ease an international tension and to strengthen the world. V.M. Khvostov writes that the role of the Soviet Union in the war and in the liberation of the peoples enslaved by Hitler was so great, its victims are so significant, its military and political might is so impressive that it managed to ensure the adoption at meetings of allies which occurred during the war, which could ensure universal peace and security - and, of course, provided that these decisions were exactly fulfilled by all their participants (Deev *et al.*, 1958, p. 70).

In his work "40 Years of the Struggle for Peace", Vladimir Khvostov wrote: "The first world war was going on - an imperialist, an aggressive one. This war only brought suffering to the working people. Breaking with the imperialist policy of the past, the Decree on Peace proclaimed the principles of the Soviet government foreign policy" (Khvostov, 1958).

V.M. Khvostov believed that foreign policy has its own specific task: it must provide the most favorable external, international conditions for the development of a new society. And such international conditions are the conditions for lasting peace. The last two chapters of the book were devoted to the struggle of the Soviet Union for the consolidation of peace and the relaxation of international tension during the post-war years (1945-1957).

In the first pages of his book, V.M. Khvostov wrote that the peacefulness of the foreign policy of the Soviet state "is not a tactic and not a temporary, transitory phenomenon, but a permanent and an indispensable property of the foreign policy of the country of socialism, conditioned by the essence of working people power and the socialist social system" (Nekrich and Khvostov, 1959, p. 12).

Vladimir Mikhailovich's book is essentially the essay on the history of Soviet foreign policy, written in a very capacious manner. This work by V.M. Khvostov was tested by time successfully. Even though the book was published in 1958, it is still of great interest to all those who seriously study the history of international relations and modern times.

The work contained a statement of the most important facts and the analysis of the principles, trends and goals of Soviet foreign policy, which the author sought to show regarding the internal policy of the Soviet Union and the development of international relations.

The history of Soviet foreign policy of 1917-1945 was described in general by the collective monograph published under the editorship by V.M. Khvostov, B.N. Ponomarev, A.A. Gromyko "The history of Foreign Policy of the USSR, 1917-1945" in 1966. The book contained a deep analysis of the strategy and tactics of

Soviet diplomacy, the main stages of its history (Gromyko *et al.*, 1960, p. 45). On many issues, such as Soviet-German relations in 1918 and in the mid-1920-ies, the negotiations on the Eastern and Pacific pacts, the Soviet-German non-aggression pact of 1939, the authors used previously unpublished materials.

In the book "Methodological manual on the new history (1870 - 1918)" Vladimir Khvostov wrote that the World War of 1914 - 1918 destroyed millions of human lives. In all the belligerent countries, about 70 million people were mobilized in the army. At least 10 million were killed and deceased from wounds, about 19 million were wounded, and 3.5 million were disabled. Besides, a lot of people died from disease and hunger. The war brought huge material losses. Entire cities and villages were erased from the earth, a huge number of bridges, tunnels, railways, factories and plants were destroyed. The material damage, caused by the war of 1914 - 1918, was enormous. V.M. Khvostov believes that the war cost humanity hundreds of billions of gold rubles. The war of 1914 - 1918 led to the breakdown of industry, agriculture and finance of almost all countries. A huge debt of some states to others appeared. The main creditor was the United States (Khvostov, 1961a).

Vladimir Khvostov states that with all its weight, the consequences of the war hit the broad masses of the working people in cities and villages.

The history of the Second World War also takes a truly significant place in the writings by Vladimir Mikhailovich Khvostov. It is important to note that the history of the war is still at the center of Russian and foreign author attention. Every year the works of historians, memoirs, local lore, fiction, the books of foreign authors are published, which acquaint readers with the events of the war "on the other side of the front". A lot of books devoted to the main battles of this war were published. The monumental works with the chronicle of operative reports from the fronts and other documentary materials of wartime appeared. A special place among the books about the war is occupied by the memoirs of the event participants - these are the memories of the commanders of the opposing armies, officers and soldiers, as well as the books of those who survived the horrors of the concentration camps. An undoubted interest will be caused by the publications devoted to the war participants - military commanders and generals (Khvostov, 1961b).

An interesting brochure was written by Vladimir Mikhailovich Khvostov and Alexander Moiseevich Nekrich "How the Second World War started". It was prepared by the Institute of History of the USSR Academy of Sciences for the 20th anniversary of World War II outbreak. The scholar tells about the causes and the situation of the war outbreak (1939-1945) in a popular manner. The authors pay a special attention to the struggle of the Soviet Union for collective security and the preservation of peace, the disclosure of the policy essence concerning the "pacification" of the fascist aggressors carried out by the Western powers (Nekrich & Khvostov, 1959).

The authors believed that the Second World War was the product of the capitalist system, the result of world economic and political forces development based on monopoly capitalism. This war was the result of the uneven development of individual capitalist countries and the fierce struggle between them on this ground for the spheres of influence and the application of capital, markets and the sources of raw materials, that is, ultimately, for world domination (Tarle *et al.*, 1939, p. 22). Scientists see capitalism as the ground on which horrible, destructive wars were born. V.M. Khvostov and A.M. Nekrich described in their works the beginning of the fascist aggression, the policy of aiding an aggressor and the policy of collective security, as well as the beginning of the Second World War by the fascists. They believed that the defeat of fascism contributed to the growth of the national liberation movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, led the colonial system of imperialism to crisis and disintegration. According to historians, a radical change in the situation after the Second World War in favor of the forces of peace, democracy and socialism is of decisive importance for the future of all mankind.

In 1958, the journal *International Affairs* published the article by Vladimir Mikhailovich Khvostov entitled "Some Results of the Discussion on the Periodization of Foreign Policy History". In the article he notes that 1939 is undoubtedly a definite frontier in the development of the USSR foreign policy (the disruption of the idea of collective opposition to the aggressor by the Munich ruling circles of the Western powers, the outbreak of war in Western Europe, the necessity for the USSR to conclude a nonaggression pact with Germany) (Mints and Khvostov, 1945, p. 26). This date is recognized as the turn of periodization by all participants of the discussion. The great importance of the period of 1933-1939 lies in the fact that during these years the building of a socialist society is basically completed in the USSR. V.M. Khvostov also noted that there is no dispute that the beginning and the end of the Great Patriotic War should be recognized as the milestones that open new periods in the development of Soviet foreign policy.

The scholar wrote that the peoples draw specific conclusions from the lessons of the recent past - the World War II; they develop the struggle for peace, against the imperialist aggressors, for the prohibition of atomic and hydrogen weapons, for the cooperation between all states based on the principle of two system coexistence more and more (Khvostov and Zubok, 1945, p. 56).

The historian believed that further development and intensification of this struggle is even more important because there are still imperialist forces that do not want to comprehend historical experience and are prepare the war again. At the same time, the ideologists of imperialism, aiming to justify the policy of armaments and aggression, distort the facts of the past and falsify history. Literature arrives to the book market of the Western powers continuously, in which the events of the eve of World War II are deliberately perverted. The attempts are being made to remove responsibility for the outbreak of war from its actual perpetrators (Khvostov, 1969a, p. 41). The spread of falsified versions of the causes of war is also carried out

through official statements. In order not to appeal to numerous examples, it is enough to recall that not long ago the US State Department issued a very lengthy statement called "The Soviet Note on Berlin. Analysis". The authors, regardless of logic, facts or common sense, declare: The Soviet Union regulated "the activity of the Communist Party of Germany on the cooperation with the Nazis and other extremists to undermine the German Weimar Republic", "the negotiations of Western countries with the USSR were interrupted by the signing of the Soviet-German treaty". This "document" contains many other, equally strange inventions (Khvostov, 1943b).

Vladimir Khvostov stated that it was not the first time when bourgeois falsifiers were trying to distort history, to present the course of events in a false light. But, as the academician wrote, the facts of history are inexorable. They give all due credit for the deeds. An objective analysis of historical reality restores a reliable picture of those fateful years when German imperialism unleashed the war (Khvostov, 1969b).

In his article "The International Political Importance of the Victory of the Soviet Union over German Fascism" Vladimir Mikhailovich wrote: "One of the most instructive lessons of the Second World War is the understanding of the fateful role played by the anticommunism of the ruling circles of the Western powers" (Khvostov, 1961a, p. 85). The whole history of the preparation of the Second World War shows an amazing picture of the class limitations and hatred of the reactionary bourgeoisie towards communism which brought the ancient cultural nations of Europe to a terrible catastrophe, to their enslavement by the Hitler hordes.

According to V.M. Khvostov, the history of the Second World War is an important lesson that cannot be ignored in modern struggle for peace. One of the reasons that allowed the fascists with the complicity of the Munich people to unleash a second world war, was the isolation of the Soviet Union. This is no more; the isolation of the USSR is a thing of the past. Vladimir Khvostov writes: "The most important prerequisite for the preservation of peace is the all-round rallying of the states of the socialist camp and the increase of their economic and political power. The strengthening of the socialist camp unity means the strengthening of the world" (Khvostov, 1953, p. 74).

The problems of the first and second world wars still attract the attention of historians and historiographers today. World historiography has many thousands of books, articles and documentary publications. In our country the theme of wars has always been extremely acute and urgent. Assessing the literature on world wars, and without denying the value of many of these works, we can still state that we are tempted to take a fresh look at the history of wars, their course, consequences and lessons.



The life and work of Academician Vladimir Khvostov was reflected in numerous publications on the topical problems of the general and national history of the XIX-th - XX-th centuries.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Speaking about Soviet historiography of the Soviet period, it is necessary to consider its ideological component, that is, the monopoly of the Marxist-Leninist methodology in the approach to the study of the problem. However, this does not reduce the significance of scientific discoveries made in 1920-1991. Undoubtedly, it was significant that at the initial stage of Soviet historiography development much attention was paid to the publication of documents on international relations at the beginning of the twentieth century, the publication of memoirs and the translation of works by foreign authors. This, of course, stimulated historians to conduct research.

#### **5. Summary**

Thus, dealing primarily with the history of diplomacy, Vladimir Mikhailovich Khvostov was the historian of a wide profile and a major organizer of science. As one of the authors and the members of the editorial board of the fourth volume he took an active part in the participation of the multivolume "History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union" preparation and a brief work on its history, edited by Academician S.N. Ponomarev, in the preparation of the "History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union", the multi-volume history of the USSR from ancient times to the present day, and the Soviet Historical Encyclopedia, he was the member of the editorial boards of various historical journals and collections.

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